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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**CENTER FOR
INNOVATION
AND IMPACT**

Staff Spotlight: Eyelachew Desta

Innovation and Scale Up Intern, Center for
Innovation and Impact (CII)



Q: What is your role at USAID?

A: I am an Innovation and Scale Up Intern with the Center for Innovation and Impact (CII). I assist and participate in work related to accelerator and prize design projects at CII. Some of the work I am currently doing also includes writing a blog post focusing on USAID-supported projects related to HIV/AIDS and community health.

Q: What did you do prior to joining CII?

A: Before working with CII, I worked on education and health promotion in a multinational refugee community in Atlanta, GA. I also helped launch the Holistic HIV Service Network (HHSN), a non-profit organization working to end the transmission of HIV/AIDS, mitigate the impact of disease on vulnerable communities, and empower those affected by the epidemic. In that role I worked mostly with Ethiopian immigrants and the diaspora. Before moving to the United States, I worked with community-based health programs in Ethiopia which focused on sexual and reproductive health, and the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV. In addition to all of this, I also completed my masters in the Community Based Primary Health Program in Global Health at Johns Hopkins.

Q: What drew you to CII?

A: The main reason for my interest in CII was the chance to learn about innovative solutions for global health programs. I have worked at the field level and I was interested in figuring out a balance between the big picture global health work and the field work that I have previously done. The [Global Health Innovation Index](#) was one of the first projects that really made me want to learn more about CII.

Q: What makes you passionate about your work?

A: Since I left my undergraduate program, I have been involved in philanthropic work that aims to help people improve their lives. I have also been involved in many global projects that are working with people living in resource-limited settings. I myself have lived in a resource limited setting so I know how difficult it is to access resources and services. While I didn't know particularly what type of work I wanted to do in these settings, I eventually found global health work and really wanted to get involved. Public health also requires knowledge of social issues, communication, and psychology, so I have found my personal experiences and work as a counselor has helped me do this work well.

Q: What do you like to do outside of work?

A: I like to listen to music, especially African jazz music (Mulatu Astatke is one of my favorites). I also enjoy spending time with friends, family, and American people to continue to share culture, language, etc.

Favorite Book or Podcast

A: "Love to The Grave" (Amharic- ፍቅር እስከ መቃብር) is An Amharic Novel by Haddis Alemayehu published in 1977, one of the best known novels in Ethiopia and considered a classic of Ethiopian literature.